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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 007794

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [IN](#) [PK](#) [INDO](#) [PAK](#)

SUBJECT: GOI J&K POINTMAN CAUTIOUSLY UPBEAT ON INDO-PAK,
OPPOSES ARTIFICIAL TIMETABLES

REF: A. NEW DELHI 7259

[B](#). NEW DELHI 1480

Classified By: DCM Robert Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In an October 4 meeting with visiting US Ambassador to Islamabad Ryan Crocker, GOI Interlocutor on Kashmir NN Vohra was generally upbeat on Indo-Pak relations and said that Islamabad is sending positive signals on Kashmir, but Musharraf is not doing enough to combat cross-border terrorism. He was forward-leaning on possibilities for future Indo-Pak cooperation in Kashmir, but cautioned that India won't be rushed into anything, especially with a Pakistani leader they feel they cannot trust. End Summary.

Upbeat on Indo-Pak State of Play

[1](#)2. (C) Vohra was positive on the diplomatic state of play between New Delhi and Islamabad, and noted incremental progress on trade and people-to-people interaction. "There is a thaw, and forward movement, but we need to foster mutual interdependence to increase peoples' investment in peace and normalcy," he said. Commenting briefly on the October 3-5 Foreign Ministers' meetings in Islamabad, Vohra predicted that "there will be some movement on Siachen," which was short-listed for special attention by the two governments in the joint statement issued later that day.

[1](#)3. (C) Vohra continued that visible indicators look good, and he listed reviving the Joint Committee to facilitate trade (Ref B), expanding trade and transportation links ("many Kashmir focused"), and PM Singh's visit to Pakistan (dates TBD) all as positive signs. On expanding transportation services in Kashmir, he told Ambassador Crocker that Pakistan had turned down a Kargil-Skardu bus route, but was interested and "on the right track" on the Jammu-Sialkot bus service. On people-to-people interactions, Vohra was especially positive, saying that "their (beneficial) impact is difficult to describe."

GOP Sending Positive Kashmir Signals ...

[1](#)4. (C) Vohra added that Islamabad's decision to shift its attention toward the moderate Mirwaiz Kashmiri separatist faction and away from hardliners such as SAS Geelani was very constructive. He described his meeting in Delhi with former Pakistani Kashmir leader Sardar Qayyum Khan as positive, if anodyne: "He said nothing revolutionary, nor did we expect him to." He noted, however, that Qayyum was castigated by extremists in Pakistan -- especially by the Hizbul Mujahadeen and the United Jihad Council terrorist outfits -- for his remark that "azadi ("freedom") would not be possible for 100 years," a comment that was well received in New Delhi.

... But Not Doing Enough on the Ground

[1](#)5. (C) Turning to Kashmir-oriented terrorism, Vohra warned that Musharraf continues to "tighten and loosen the tap," the jihadis remain the main players in Kashmir, he affirmed, and Geelani cannot be entirely written off. He was particularly concerned by a disturbing new trend of high altitude infiltration the Army tracked over the past few months. According to Vohra, even large groups of terrorists are beginning to choose passes over 15,000 feet and in tougher terrain over easier traditional routes.
India Knows It Can't Avoid Kashmir Forever ...

[1](#)6. (C) Vohra downplayed Pakistani concerns that normalizing Indo-Pak relations would allow New Delhi to forget Kashmir: "It's just not possible, the whole world wants us to solve this." He agreed with Ambassador Crocker on the importance of articulating to Islamabad that this was an unfounded fear, and that both governments need to address the aspirations of all their peoples. The GOI considers the confidence-building and normalization processes to be the necessary groundwork for, and not an alternative to, substantial progress on Kashmir, Vohra explained.

... But Artificial Timelines Do Not Help

17. (C) Vohra throughout the meeting reiterated that the GOI would not permit Musharraf to "hurry up a solution." "Musharraf needs to keep to a reasonable pace, pushing does not work in India, speeding up a process only leads people to question more deeply what you are doing," he advised. Vohra also cautioned against raising expectations of a timeline, as long as incremental progress continued at a reasonable pace.

Indo-Pak Water Cooperation Critical (and Possible)

18. (C) Water scarcity is a contentious issue in both countries, especially in the two Punjabs, because the glaciers that feed the watersheds are contracting at an alarming pace, Vohra reported. He underlined that bilateral relations would have to improve dramatically before any substantial cooperation in this field is possible, and noted that a number of hydel projects in J&K have added to Indo-Pak tensions (Ref A). That said, Vohra outlined a series of cooperative projects that he said would benefit both countries once relations are firmly on the right track: joint forest and conservation management, soliciting Pakistani investment in hydel power generation in J&K to give Pakistanis a voice and a stake in development, and "free trade in power" (i.e. connecting the electricity grids).

GOI Needs Musharraf to Prove Himself

19. (C) Vohra contrasted Musharraf ("one man answerable to nobody else") to the UPA government ("a coalition answerable to a dozen constituencies and more"). Ambassador Crocker answered that Musharraf must still balance important constituencies and did not have the unimpeded freedom of action that some ascribe to him. Vohra nodded in agreement when Ambassador Crocker added that public sentiment is important even in non-democracies, but underlined that the GOI needed to be confident that Musharraf would live up to his commitments, including on terrorism -- and demonstrate this by taking "irreversible steps against terrorist infrastructure" -- before New Delhi would entertain any "final solution" on Kashmir. Ambassador Crocker pointed out that, ultimately, only the GOI could determine Musharraf's sincerity.

10. (U) Ambassador Crocker has cleared this message.

11. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:
(<http://www.state.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)
Mulford